The Vines live again!

The Vines made a triumphant return to the stage last weekend after the bust-up that threatened the future of the band.

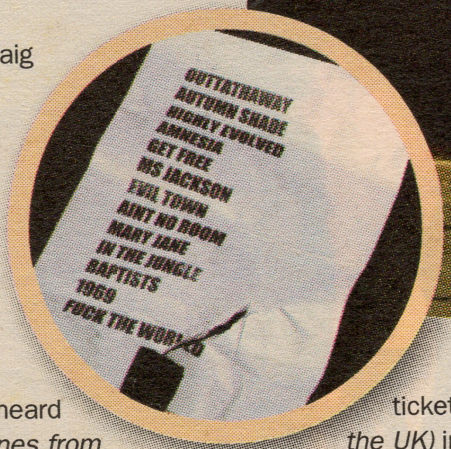
Playing on the first Australian leg of the Big Day Out festival on the Gold Coast (January 19), The Vines showed no signs of the friction that dogged their US tour at the end of last year. The band were forced to cancel all non-Australian dates for the start of 2003, including their *NME* Carling Awards Show (February 12). Apart from the usual erratic guitar-lurching from frontman **Craig Nicholls**, the set – one of the first to be played since Nicholls and bassist **Patrick Mathews**' onstage brawl in Boston – remained remarkably incident free.

The 13-song set climaxed with Nicholls smashing his guitar at the end of an explosive 'Fuck The World', flipping the 45,000 strong crowd a peace sign and walking offstage – unusually leaving **Hamish Rosser**'s drumkit intact.

Speaking with *NME* backstage, Craig was keen to refute rumours of a Vines break-up and apologised to fans who'd bought tickets for the *NME* show.

"I don't know how these rumours start," he said. "I guess... there were a lot of people at that show in Boston, I remember Coldplay were there and a lot of journalists, so if they saw that and heard about Jay Leno *(who banned The Vines from his TV show after Nicholls trashed the set during soundcheck)* it would be like 'The Vines are falling apart!' Hopefully touring will be good again now. Hopefully we don't burn out again.

Perfect Day Out: The Vines



"Sorry if you've bought tickets. But I think we are trying to come *(to the UK)* in April for a week – but I can't give too much away. Nothing's been booked."

Since returning to Australia, The Vines have laid down four tracks for the hotly anticipated follow-up to debut 'Highly Evolved'.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JO MCCAUGHEY/IAN JENNINGS